

CHAMPIONS Wycombe Wanderers reserved their very best performance of the season for their last home game on Thursday night. And, to be honest, no words can describe this display which produced eight magnificent goals in a second half the spectators will never forget.

Yes, it was 0-0 after 45 minutes and no-one could have predicted what was to follow. Superb football flowed from the Wycombe players in wave after wave of attacks that produced six home goals of the very best calibre. Leading the way was Dylan Evans with a hat-trick while Geoff Anthony grabbed two and Howard Kennedy the other.

Dagenham, one of the top sides in the league and still in with a faint chance of the championship at the time, hauled themselves back to 3-2 but were then swamped by the sheer speed, accuracy and all-round brilliance of Wycombe's football. On the night, no team could have halted the Wanderers machine which churned out their most exciting football for many years.

This display took one back to their five first half goals scored against Kettering in the F. A. Cup four years ago — it was as good as that, if not better. And it goes without saying, this was Wanderers biggest league win of the season.

It has been said before but it was on the cards that someone would suffer for the many missed chances throughout the season and on Thursday night, Wycombe took out their frustrations on Dagenham. For once, everything went right and the goals just kept coming. It was an orgy of attacking football for the 900 fans and just reward for those who turned up to support their side in the last home game.

Once again, it is difficult to select individuals from this superlative team performance but Evans must be singled out for his best ever display for Wycombe. Dylan, often criticised for his inconsistency, proved us all wrong on the night by hardly putting a foot wrong. He oozed confidence whenever he had the ball and his finishing was deadly. If only he had produced this form earlier in the season, if only the team had played half as well, the league title would have been their's long ago.

Two other players had their best games of the season — Holifield and Anthony. Mick, playing in his old left wing position, was irrepressible and gave young full back Peter Wellman a nightmare 90 minutes. His pace, aggression and close control was of the highest class. Little Geoff Anthony was just as much a threat on the other flank to Paul Currie who was roundly booed by the crowd for one particularly bad foul on the Welshman. Geoff got up and proceeded to give a tremendous display as well as snapping up his goals.

If those three individual performances are added to the other eight players, none of whom had bad games, you get some idea of why Wanderers were at their best.

Small wonder manager Brian Lee was ecstatic after the game. It was Brian's last home league match too, of course, and he could hardly have dreamt for a better send off. As he said, "It was magic!"

One other person contributed to this football feast, groundsman Jock Sheppard. Loakes Park looked a treat on Thursday, as it has all season. This surface must be the best in the league at the moment and Jock deserves the highest praise for his efforts.

Wanderers brought in Dave Alexander and Howard Kennedy for this game as Holifield moved up front for the injured Tony Horseman, who was the substitute. Early on, it was Dagenham who looked more dangerous with John Maskell

pushing Jim Holder's seventh minute shot round a post. Delaney robbed the same player a minute later only two yards from the goalline.

Frequent back passes whenever danger threatened showed Dagenham were taking no chances and stood in stark contrast to Wycombe's cool passing which took them out of trouble at the back.

Holder and Mick Springett both tested Maskell as the half progressed but the closest effort came from Mal Harkins, a prolific goalscorer for the Essex club. He ran clear of the defence and hammered in a shot which Maskell brilliantly tipped onto the crossbar.

In the last few minutes of the half, Wanderers gave a hint of what was to come after the interval. Kennedy was just wide with a chip and then Paul Birdseye ran into the box and thundered in a shot which Ian Huttley parried and Holder cleared off the line. Evans, whose flicks and nudges were vastly improved, had a goal ruled out in the 43rd minute for a foul on the 'keeper by Holifield.

Mutterings of a goalless draw soon ceased when Wanderers raced into a 2-0 lead after just eight minutes of the new half. The first came in the 49th minute and was a real beauty. Anthony swerved past Currie on the bottom wing and crossed into the middle. Holifield outjumped the defence to nod on for Evans to trap the ball and send a fierce drive into the top corner. Four minutes later Anthony received the ball on halfway from Ray Eaton. Kennedy was steaming up on the right and met Geoff's inch perfect pass with a first time drive which flew past Huttley into the corner.

Dagenham must have wondered what had hit them but they came back in the 58th minute through a penalty. Keith Mead, dived to clear inside the area but curled his arm around the ball and referee Martin immediately pointed to the spot. Maskell guessed which way Harkins would place the kick but the shot was too well struck. It was his 101st goal in two seasons for the club.

Holifield almost scored after robbing Dennis Moore but in the 65th minutes Wycombe went 3-1 up after a mistake by John Kettleborough. The big centre-half tried to pass back but Anthony was onto the ball in a flash and cleverly lobbed a shot over the advancing Huttley.

But Dagenham weren't

finished. They soaked up more pressure and then rallied to 3-2 with a finely taken goal by Springett. Holder supplied the pass and Springett gave Maskell little chance with a swerving 12 yard shot into the roof of the net.

At 3-2, the game still looked open. Dagenham, however, were growing increasingly physical at the back and gave a way a string of free kicks which only increased the pressure. That pressure paid off handsomely in the form of three more goals. For the remaining minutes of this match Wanderers broke down and destroyed a hard defence to send Dagenham home completely bewildered.

Goal number four came in the 79th minute. Holifield again figured in the build up, racing past Wellman and crossing to the far post. Kennedy left it to Evans who duly obliged with a thunderous first time drive from almost 20 yards. Huttley couldn't have seen it.

By now Wanderers were unstoppable and showing the sort of form that would have taken any defence apart. Holifield, who deserved a goal more than most, ran into the box in the 85th minute and beat Huttley with a curling drive. It thudded against a post and Anthony picked up the trimmings by hooking the ball back over the line from a narrow angle.

A minute later it was an incredible 6-2 and Evans had completed his hat-trick. He took the ball down 30 yards out and after reaching the edge of the penalty area, drove the ball under Huttley's body.

"We want seven" was the joyous chant from the crowd in the closing seconds. They almost got it too on a couple of occasions but when the final whistle came, Wanderers trooped off the field to a thoroughly deserved standing ovation. We are unlikely to see 45 minutes of such superb entertainment again and those who were fortunate enough to witness this game will treasure the memory.

WYCOMBE: A. Maskell, P. Birdseye, K. Mead, J. Delaney, R. Eaton, H. Kennedy, T. Reardon, D. Alexander, G. Anthony, D. Evans, M. Holifield. Sub. A. Horseman (not used).

DAGENHAM: I. Huttley, P. Wellman, D. Moore, J. Kettleborough, (Sub T. Harris 73 mins), P. Currie, J. Borland, F. Saul, J. Holder, M. Harkins, N. Fox, M. Springett. Referee: J. Martin (Croydon).

Half-Time: 0-0 **Goalscorers,** Wycombe: Evans 3 (49, 79, 86), Anthony 2 (65, 85), Kennedy (53). **Dagenham:** Harkins pen (58), Springett (70).

Official paying attendance: 781. **Approx total:** 900.